Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

November 16, 2026

Dear New Jersey Port and Terminal Operators:

As Members of the New Jersey Congressional Delegation, we write to share concerns related to the importation of Russian-origin diesel fuel under the Department of the Treasury's Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC) General License 135.

Congress enacted the *Ending Importation of Russian Oil Act of 2022* to prohibit imports of Russian-origin energy products, including diesel, into the United States, subjecting relief from that prohibition to specific statutory requirements.[1] Those requirements include a written presidential certification, consultation with Congress at least 45 days prior to said certification, and clear evidence that Russia has (1) halted military aggression pursuant to an agreement with Ukraine, (2) recognized Ukrainians' right to determine their own governance, and (3) ceased posing any threat to North Atlantic Treaty Organization members.[2]

The Trump Administration failed to comply with these statutory requirements when it issued General License No. 135 and subsequently announced a deal to purchase diesel from Russia on October 9, 2026 – all while Russia continued military aggression against Ukraine.[3] As such, any importation of Russian-origin diesel fuel pursuant to the license would violate federal law and expose receiving entities in New Jersey to significant legal risk, including criminal and civil liability under 18 U.S.C. § 545 and 19 U.S.C. § 1595a.[4] The urgency of this risk has been recognized by New Jersey Governor Mikie Sherrill, who noted the illegality of the Administration's diesel deal and is evaluating ways to protect New Jersey from receiving the diesel unlawfully.[5]

We also know that any revenue from energy exports will bolster Russia's capacity to continue waging war against Ukraine and endanger U.S. security interests abroad. Importing Russian fuel betrays our ally – a betrayal that carries particular significance for New Jersey's substantial Ukrainian American community. For many members of our communities, Russia's war against Ukraine is not an abstract foreign policy challenge, but a direct threat to relatives, friends, cultural institutions, and a country to which they remain deeply connected. For these New Jersey families, Russian energy imports fuel a war effort that inflicts immense suffering on people and places they care about.

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[1] *Ending Importation of Russian Oil Act*, Pub. L. No. 117–109, § 2, 136 Stat. 1154 (Apr. 8, 2022)

[2] *Ending Importation of Russian Oil Act*, Pub. L. 117–109, § 3(c)(1)-(2) 136 Stat. 1154, (Apr. 8, 2022)

[3] Reuters, *Russia to extend diesel export ban, use quotas to fulfil US deal, sources say,* Oct. 29, 2026 https://www.reuters.com/business/energy/russia-extend-diesel-export-ban-use-quotas-fulfil-us-deal-sources-say-2026-10-29/

[4] House Committee on the Judiciary, *Ranking Member Raskin Puts Oil Industry on Notice: Anyone Helping Trump and Putin Evade America's Ban Russian Oil Could Face Criminial Penalties*, Oct. 26, 2026 https://democrats-judiciary.house.gov/media-center/press-releases/ranking-member-raskin-puts-oil-industry-on-notice-anyone-helping-trump-and-putin-evade-america-s-ban-on-russian-oil-could-face-criminal-penalties

[5] The Washington Sun, *Trump Aides Are Leaning on U.S. Firms to Accept Russian Diesel*, Oct. 29, 2026 https://www.washingtonsun.com/whitehouse/trump-aides-leaning-us-firms-accept-russian-diesel

If Russian fuel reaches the United States in the coming weeks, any entities that unlawfully accept the diesel will be exposed to legal risk and liability. We appreciate your attention to this urgent matter and remain committed to conducting congressional oversight to ensure compliance with federal law.

Sincerely,

Robert J. Menendez
Member of Congress

Analilia Mejia
Member of Congress

Frank Pallone, Jr.
Member of Congress

Bonnie Watson Coleman
Member of Congress

LaMonica McIver
Member of Congress

Nellie Pou
Member of Congress

Josh Gottheimer
Member of Congress

Donald Norcross
Member of Congress

Herbert C. Conaway, Jr.
Member of Congress